

The Kibarla

**In Kerala . A Record . of
a Tour in the South of India with
Their Highnesses the Maharaja and
Maharani Gaekwar, June-July, 1915**

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* Photos by Willie Burke, Ootacamund.

Others by courtesy of the Travancore Government.

Days dawn on us that make amends for many ;

Sometimes

When heaven and earth seem sweeter even than any

Man's rhymes.

And yet these days of subtler air and finer

Delight,

When lovelier looks the darkness, and diviner

The light—

The gift they give of all these golden hours,

Whose urn

Pours forth reverberate rays or shadowing showers

In turn—

Clouds, beams, and winds that make the live day's track

Seem living—

What were they did no spirit give them back

Thanksgiving ?

—SWINBURNE, *The Interpreters.*

IN KERALA

CHAPTER I

KOLLENGODE

WE LEAVE OOTACAMUND: VISIT COIMBATORE AND ITS COLLEGES: ARRIVE AT KOLLENGODE: PRESENTATION OF PRIZES AT THE RAJA'S HIGH SCHOOL: THE PALACES: HOSPITALITY AND ENTERTAINMENT: VARIED MUSIC: DANCES BY GIRLS AND BOYS.

June 26.

YESTERDAY, at Ootacamund, we were in blissful enjoyment of cold winds, wearing the warmest clothes in our possession, cheered by blazing wood fires; to-day, in Kollengode, chasing fugitive breezes, we mop streaming brows. For it is hot here, notwithstanding the heavy rain which hailed our coming, and there is a steamy dampness abroad reminiscent of Baroda, what time the world pantingly awaits a delaying monsoon.

Their Highnesses the Maharaja and Maharani Gaekwar have just set out on a tour which, commencing with Kollengode, its hills and forests, its elephants and bison, is to continue, through Cochin and Travancore, even to Cape

Comorin in the far distant south. Great traveller as he is, the Maharaja has never yet been able to visit Kerala, land of wonder, of magic, of enchantment; now, opportunity taken by the forelock, full of eager expectation, we go thither by pleasantly easy stages.

Yesterday morning our procession of five motors made its way out of Woodstock's beautiful gardens, while guns boomed in farewell salute. It was raining hard; and the hood and side-curtains of the venerable car in which it was my lot to travel proved no sufficient shield against Nilgiri down-pourings. Their Highnesses led the way in the Rolls-Royce, the second car of that make running down empty, assurance against possible breakdowns. Through Coonoor and Wellington, by sharply curving roads and hair-pin bends, now shadowed by giant peaks, now skirting sheer descents into umbrageous valleys, over and under the line of rail, we travelled to Coimbatore. Long will that journey be remembered, if only for two scenes of rare beauty; the first, the Kateri Falls, swollen by the heavy rain of the past week, leaping with roar and tumult from boulder to boulder, caressed by down-leaning trees on its way, merrily splashing the cars as they

pass ; the second, the foaming muddy-brown torrent of the Bhowani river, chafing at restraint of banks or bridge as a horse frets and fumes under the curb ; and, in vivid contrast, the green of overhanging branches, the blue of the sky, now clear of all clouds save those which darkly frown on distant hill-tops.

I cannot say that the road was comfortable ; the cars jolted and swayed, and we were even as those who affrightedly venture on a stormy sea, fearing the worst, yet sternly looking destiny in the face. At times, indeed, one feared that the best of springs must part, so strenuous were our experiences. The Rolls-Royce is, of course, above the sensation of road shock ; but the other, lesser, cars are not.

Early in the afternoon we arrived at a point two miles or so out of Coimbatore, to turn off the main road to the Colleges of Agriculture and Forestry which His Highness had arranged to visit. The latter was not in actual working order, though in location and arrangement admirable enough ; but the College of Agriculture was in open session, and received that meed of enthusiastic praise which certainly is its due. We found it staffed with European experts in the several branches, splendidly

equipped as to laboratories and libraries, museum and farm, and everything else to delight the practical student and observer. Quarters too there are for staff and students, quarters for every single being attached, or likely to be attached, to the College, in neat blocks connected by wide roads, and, in the near distance, fine large houses for the superior professorial staff. Here is a dream of the educationist in India on the way to realisation. The College completely self-contained, far removed from contaminating slums, set in the midst of wide spaces, complete—even to hospital and post office. The Principal, Mr. Wood, conducted the party around, both Maharaja and Maharani asking many pointed questions; not all distinguished visitors to a College show such continuously alert interest in work attempted or performed.

Leaving the Colleges, we drove round Coimbatore, not an imposing town, but characterised, none the less, by open streets and well-built houses—of which a large percentage are the habitations of members of the legal profession, if one may judge by the names and degrees of the owners, so prominently displayed for the information of the passer-by. We had little

time for enquiry, were behind our programme. So on to Podanur, passing over another river, full and running in spate ; the bridge was under repair, and the temporary erection, with little or no respect for rulers, having vanished in the flood, it became necessary for all to descend, to walk across, the cars following with cautious hesitation. Tea we had in the refreshment-room at Podanur Station—but think not that we fared as ordinary travellers ; the far-reaching hospitality of the Raja of Kollengode had so provided that we feasted at ease in a decorated room, china of valuable delicacy for our use, the good things of the earth at our instant service.

From Podanur to Kollengode, sixty miles or so, the motors carry us to the end of the first stage of our journey. The countryside is of a diversity most remarkable, typical Western Ghat scenery alternating with moist, softly green paddy fields, and dignified palm trees, these last recalling slumbering memories of wet Sunday afternoons long ago in England, and of two small boys who lay flat on stomachs, chins in hand, poring over old illustrated books on India, produced on such occasions only from the Rectory library. Approaching our destination

we come close under the grim hills, here and there silver lines of coursing waters standing out in high relief against the sombre background ; we are in a country new, full of invitation, land of the Matriarchate and Missionary endeavour, home of a delightful people.

We come to a toll-bar, to discover that Their Highnesses' car has not yet arrived--universal consternation ! They have taken the wrong road at a turning fifteen miles back ; but, no sooner is their absence discovered than they come, all is well again. Soon decorated roads make us aware that we are within the Raja's sphere ; we look ahead for signs of the town, at entrance to which we are to halt, that fitting welcome, with all due ceremony, may be offered to the Maharaja and Maharani. Many farms by the road-side, surrounded as to main buildings by high mud walls, with barns and cattle-sheds substantially built, give to the countryside an air of all-pervading prosperity comforting to the eye ; while from the road to the Ghats beyond is nothing but greens of paddy and of tree, and, here and there, touches of red from little house tops.

At last a concourse of people, sounds of music, we have arrived; the cars come to a

halt that the Raja and the local Brahmins may offer the customary garlands and other insignia of greeting ; all around surges, respectfully curious, the population of Kollengode in festival temper. The Raja takes a seat in Their Highnesses' car, five towering elephants precede us, very slowly we go on our way, lit by flaring torches, flanked by lofty banners, approved by the gestures and exclamations of the multitude.

Nimbalkar and I had been compelled by a fortunate breakdown to occupy the second Rolls-Royce; this rejoices in a syren road-clearer of peculiar virulence, and in an Italian chauffeur with a sense of humour. The crowd was at its thickest, in its most cheerful mood ; with an awe-inspiring howl the syren spoke—screamed piercingly; in horrified dismay the crowd fell back, mothers protectingly snatched at their children, all sought everywhere the cause of this devilish noise ; once discovered, there rose from all, from men, women, and children, a gale of laughter, healthy, uproarious, extravagantly delighted.

The scene was at its picturesque height, I was busy storing in mind impressions entirely new, when, suddenly and without

warning, in torrents down came the rain ; the motors having been opened, we were drowning, all was in confusion. The procession was abandoned, the crowds disappeared, we speeded to the Palace. A blaze of lights, seen dimly through a mist of rain, stout walls of stone around a shadowy compound indefinite in growing darkness, bring us to a Gate-House. We cross a storm-swept open courtyard to a further block of buildings where, in a pillared room, the ladies of the family offer the Maharaja and Maharani welcome with all the beauty of Eastern ritual.

June 27.

I have been reading a Government publication, and find it fascinating. It is the Malabar Gazetteer ; hear what it includes in an account of the local Land Revenue system and its origins :—

“ . . . the taxes upon which the Hindu Rajas depended for their revenues between the date of the departure of the last of the Perumals and the Mysorean invasion. Many of them were not so much taxes as feudal rights and prerogatives. The Raja levied customs duties upon exports and imports, and taxes

upon the houses of fishermen, tradesmen, and professional men. Criminal fines went to fill his coffers, and succession duties were levied upon the estates of deceased persons, especially those who held offices or rights over land. Outcaste women were a two-fold source of profit. They were made over to the Raja with a premium as compensation for looking after them, and they were sold by him as slaves or wives to Chettis. The estates of persons who died without heirs were escheated; nor could an heir be adopted without the Raja's consent, given of course at a price. Protection fees under various names were levied from dependants and strangers, and customary presents were his due on occasions of feast or funeral. Wrecks were his perquisite, and various animals his monopoly. Among such animals may be mentioned cows with three or five dugs, cattle that had killed a man or other animal, cattle with a white spot near the corner of the eye, buffaloes with white tips to their tails, wild elephants caught in traps, and wild hogs that had fallen into wells."

Or again, listen to the Gazetteer on the subject of our noble host, the Raja, his position and privileges :—

"Kollengode is the seat of the Venganad Nambidi whose family claim descent from an ancient Kshatriya Raja named Vira Ravi. The name Ravi Varma is accordingly still affixed to the names of all the male members of the family. Their former dominions

comprised eight amsams in or near Kollengode, and were eventually absorbed by the Zamorin when he conquered Naduvattam In this temple (Kachamkurissi) all the Nambudris of Malabar, Cochin, and Travancore, have to receive from the senior member of the Venganad family as preliminary to the performance of a sacrifice, the moon plant, the skin of a black buck, and a piece of wood known as 'karinkalli' (*Mimosa catechu*). The Valiya Nambidi holds this right as the representative of Gandharva and in virtue thereof is prohibited from walking barefooted. He also has the right of entering the Srikovit of any temple, and of eating with Brahmins, though he does not wear the punul. These privileges are supposed to have been conferred by Parasu Rama with the title of Nambidi, which is borne by the two senior members of the family."

Now, having read what the Gazetteer has to say of the Raja, consider the fact that he bears his title as a personal distinction, that he is, or has just ceased to be, a member of the Legislative Council of the Governor of Madras, that he works continuously and successfully for the good of his estate, that he speaks excellent English, and is in every way a man of achievement and personal charm ; contrast these things with what the Gazetteer has to say of his position ; you will agree with me that between his present attributes and those of his ancestors,

there is a striking contrast—and yet, the Raja is exactly what his predecessors have been in relation to the Nambudris of the South, and doubtless fulfills his functions towards them with the same conscientious devotion that he has shown in taking part in the work of a Legislative Council. India is a land of contrasts, indeed ; a perpetually interesting problem involving a meeting between ideals of East and West confessedly impossible, yet in a sense, a paradoxical sense, proven possible in experience.

The family estates extend over 100 square miles of arable land, and 150 of forest, and hills, the latter the home of a considerable tea and coffee industry, the Raja having five European planters as tenants.

The town consists of two straggling streets whence branch off, here and there, many mysterious lanes, avenues of approach to secluded homes ; a large tank forms the centre, where this morning I watched an industrious mother vehemently washing her small, and most unwilling, son, while close by graceful women performed their ablutions, not at all abashed at distant observation. Prosperity is evidenced as much by the well fed, well clothed

appearance of the people, as by the neatness and orderly arrangement of houses and gardens.

But without doubt, it can rain in these parts. The lofty walls surrounding all considerable habitations, securing a most jealously guarded privacy, are moss-grown, oozing dampness to eye and touch ; the fields are, to-day at any rate, miniature irrigation tanks from which numbers of attractive little women, smilingly inquisitive, look up for a moment as the cars pass along the road, to speculate on the nature of these strange visitants, to rest the while limbs cramped with toil.

Yesterday morning, quite early, we were to have visited the locally famous temple of Kachamkurissi, but heavy rain caused the abandonment of the idea ; instead Their Highnesses explored the Palaces, old and new, and the Guest House, all separate, yet connected one with the other by covered ways, or open courtyards. Beyond the inner enclosure, in the outer grassy space which high walls protect from the inquisitive beyond the pale, stood the five elephants we had already met ; at hand, huge balks of teak for use in the performance to be given by the mighty beasts, to be lifted, balanced, and carried, at word of command.

The skies having cleared, we went out to view, to be interested, to bring cameras into action.

While the Maharaja and Maharani were at breakfast—on this occasion a meal after the Malabar fashion—they were entertained by a famous exponent of the Veena, one Chitth Sabisan from Mayavaram.

Later in the morning the Collector of Malabar, Mr. Innes, called, followed by the Madras Director of Public Instruction, Mr. Duncan, the Sub-Collector, Mr. Hall, the Additional District Magistrate, Mr. Row, and the Head of the Sanskrit College at Pattambi, Punnesseri Neelakanta Sarma, also referred to as 'one of the leading Ayurvedic Physicians of Malabar.' After tea, all moved on to witness, or take part in, the important engagement of the day, the distribution of prizes by the Maharani to the proud girls and boys of the Raja's High School, an adequate building, shaped L-wise, glowing red in a sea of surrounding green. Full to overflowing with pupils and guests, full too, to the brim, with enthusiasm and pleasure, the little school house was a memorable sight as small boys, excellently drilled, handsome and well-built, came forward to recite in English, Malayalam, and Sanskrit; to be followed by

pretty sisters, in the garb reserved for high days and holidays, who sing songs of welcome with daintily dignified gestures and swayings. Then Her Highness, with a smiling graciousness all her own, gave away prizes to those who had excelled, including one to our host's own daughter. On the dais with Their Highnesses, were the Dewan, the Collector, the Raja, and the Director.

The Head Master's Report, after giving an account of the School, its fortunes, and its present position, academic and financial, referred to the visitors whom the School delighted to honour as follows :—

“ We, the teachers and students, take this opportunity of according a very hearty welcome to Your Highnesses on the occasion of your visit to our school. We feel proud that to-day we add to the distinguished galaxy of our visitors one who is the ruler of one of the most enlightened of Native States in India, and who has acquired a world-wide fame on account of sterling merit and many noble qualities of head and heart. We are specially proud of the presence of Her Highness the Maharani Saheb at to-day's function. We wish Your Highness a happy sojourn in this place, and hope you will both

carry away pleasant recollections of your visit to this Institution and to the Venganad country."

His Highness, in reply, made a short, but none the less effective speech, received with much applause. He said :

" RAJA SAHEB, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—

It has given me the greatest pleasure to be able to accept the Raja Saheb's kind invitation to preside at this prize distribution to-day. The Head Master has said some extremely kind things about me. I wish I could feel that they were deserved. Yet I may claim the possession of a deep and lasting interest in the cause of Indian education, and you may be sure that to hear of the good work which has been, and is being done in this High School gives me the greatest pleasure. If there is one thing more than another of importance to the future of India it is the development of education, and the widening of its scope. I congratulate you, Mr. Head Master, on the excellent report you have been able to give of the School's progress.

May I further say what a pleasure it has been to me to make the acquaintance of your Raja? It is a sign of happiest augury for our country to find one of her leading noblemen

so deeply and personally interested in forwarding her moral and material interests. I have congratulated the Head Master on the steady progress shown in his Report ; I must further, most sincerely and emphatically, congratulate the School and people of Kollengode on the possession of a Raja of such personal charm, whose marked gifts and attainments are so constantly devoted to their advancement.

On behalf of Her Highness, I thank you very much for your kind reference to her. We are both delighted with what we have seen of Kollengode, her Raja, and her people. We wish you all possible prosperity, and shall ever retain most pleasant memories of the kind reception given us to-day."

Followed votes of thanks, garlands, and flowers, cheers for Their Highnesses, and singing of the National Anthem ; followed too, dramatic and touching, a call for "three cheers for our gallant soldiers at the Front" from the Raja, responded to with heartily sincere enthusiasm. A little school-house in a comparatively small, far distant, Indian town ; just such an essentially Indian gathering as the perverted Teuton would expect to manifest violence of hostility to the British cause ; and

three cheers, full of spontaneity, for those fighting "our" battles.

So we return to the Palace. A most interesting building of essentially Indian design; in the architect's mind, I am sure, not a single disturbing element of Westernism to rob his work of its characteristic charm. An outer house of two stories whence, in less settled days, watchmen kept ward over ingress and egress, privacy, if desired, obtained by the closing of wooden shutters, but otherwise open to all the winds that blow, used now as a place of reception; across an open court the old Palace may be reached, which only the privileged by birth may enter, from which, in these days, come much sound of music, many voices of merry childhood, a deal of laughter and singing. Its ceilings are supported on massive teak beams, flawless, everywhere adorned by the carved snake symbol, the hood wide displayed as in act to strike; its rooms have square platforms of polished stone, a vantage ground whence master or mistress may address retainers seeking orders, standing below. I may not enter the Old Palace, home of the Household Gods; for me there is need to cross the courtyard towards the inner wall, to pass

through a gateway into another, larger, court, to enter the New Palace, similar in design to the Old, yet larger, more ornamental. Here Their Highnesses are housed, while we, of the suite, are provided for in the Guest House adjoining, reached by a tapestry-hung verandah. The Maharaja and Maharani receive visitors and watch entertainments in an outer Hall of Audience, a spacious room of wood and stone, a low wall separating it from the courtyard on two sides, passages running through it, on plinth level, below the raised platform, a solid block of black granite, hauled with difficulty from distant forests by the united labours of four elephants, and a hundred times four men. Here too, teak pillars support a shaped roof, and everywhere, on pillars, door-posts, cornices, and capitals, quaint carvings inspired by Puranic legends. Pass through the door which gives entrance to the Palace proper. You will come to a galleried square, in the centre a deep receptacle for water, forming at will a most desirable bathing pool ; opposite, a flight of stairs, curiously carved, cunningly shaped, leads to the living rooms above ; on your right, in deep shadow, there is a recessed room, smaller, but of similar

design, to the outer Hall. Go further, through yet more doors, still other galleried squares ; you arrive at last at the service arrangements, there to see, with a gasp of delighted astonishment, a gaudy peacock sunning himself in splendour on a carved railing, a Byam Shaw illustration to the Arabian Nights.

In the open, at the removed end of the Palace, is the tank, screened from gaze ; for, in it all members of the family, without exception, without regard for the seasons, must daily immerse themselves, failing which ceremony, duly performed, a bath is no bath, has no purifying power. More than this, all families must have their own private burning ground, for to the dead, as to the living, privacy is all ; the rule has it that the tank shall be in the north-east, the burning ground in the south-east, of the compound.

A curious relic of olden time is the regulation, customary but none the less binding, that every compound shall preserve a patch of jungle which may not be disturbed, a reminder perhaps of the days when the family would seek for itself an isolated home, build it up in the jungle, there to struggle for existence ; and in this reservation the snake is sacred, has set

there, in threatening granite, an image of itself.

The people of Malabar do not erect their houses with that excessive economy of space which characterises our towns and cities. The humblest of cottages has here some pretence at a surrounding compound, in which the daily ritual may be observed in accordance with ancient practice ; in which, too, will always be found, in the centre, the plant of basil. the sacred *tulsi*. The Hindu of Malabar, of gentle birth and ancient lineage, like the proud Roman of old, has an inherent love of space and open air ; as his classical prototype built his villa on four sides of an open courtyard, the *impluvium*, so does he erect his dwelling.

Another quaint piece of information comes from the Malabar Gazetteer : one has frequent cause to admire the warm touches given to the landscape by the ever-present red roofs ; this would not have been possible in other days, for the use of tiles was then a sumptuary privilege of temples, and of the higher aristocracy :—

It was a special favour that permission was given to the English merchants at Calicut by the Zamorin to tile their factory.

After dinner last night, in the room I have called, lacking a better title, 'The Hall of Audience', the Maharaja and Maharani were entertained with music by the ladies of the Raja's family. It is not given to all to appreciate Indian music ; but there are few of any taste who would not have yielded to the enchantment of the performance of the daintily accomplished relatives of our host, as they played and sang to us. Nor did the charm lie only in the music. Dimness of lights, flickering shadows playing on walls and pillars, whence dream-like figures of Oriental allegory stepped from their wooden retreats, to live, and move, and have being ; flowing draperies of white, graceful arms of bronze, dignity in all enjoyment ; brooding melancholy in sound and surroundings. We were at vast distance from the routine of experience, from modernity, from materialism, removed magically to the India of legend, of heroes.

This morning, in the freshness of the early hours, we visited the Sitagundu Falls, where in ancient days, fair Sita sat and talked with Rama. Motors took us a part of the way, chairs borne by lusty porters the rest. A beautiful spot, picturesque and romantic.

And this afternoon, a miracle. For years I have utterly loathed and abhorred the sleep-banishing tom-tom, with all its hideous accompaniment of trumpet, horn and cymbal ; suddenly I have been converted to a belief that they may sometimes be attractive. For the delectation of his guests the Raja had arranged what the official programme calls a display of “ different kinds of tom-toms peculiar to Malabar.” Comes forward in the courtyard a group of men, forms a semi-circle, the tom-tom expert in the centre ; a sustained crescendo from the longest horn ever made commences the concerto; four or five bars later, the tom-tom performer, who has meanwhile been fondly fingering his instrument, sweeps his right hand round a full circle, strikes it with a resonant thump, sending vibrating echoes the length and breadth of our world; his companions join in with bangings and tappings, their fingers protected as to the tips by silver thimbles, while yet others shriek piercingly through brass, bellow from horns, bending and genuflecting the while. The attraction, I become increasingly convinced, is due to lack of monotony. The listener shrinkingly steels

himself to receive, Spartan-wise, an ear-fracturing bang: come instead gentlest of caressing taps; lured to inattentive reflection by succession of murmuring sounds, he is suddenly made to bound from his seat by horrifying storms and lightnings. Perversely attractive perhaps, but not to be recommended for chamber concerts.

Follows a more restrained performance, this time by a vocalist, a fine-looking gentleman, with a distinctly good voice, judged by any standard; but its effect spoilt for me by unscientific production, by the straining of vocal chords, by distortion of throat, by all the symptoms of excessive effort.

June 28.

This morning we enjoyed a rare experience. Arrive from schools in the town some jolly little boys, some fascinating little girls, to give of their best for our amusement. The girls first, as is their due, shyly mount the dais, and to the accompaniment of a portable instrument of torture called a harmonium—O, my country, you have much for which to answer—clash of cymbal, and beat of drum, go through a series of complicated dances without faltering, rather

with absolute perfection of grace and gesture. One in particular, the smallest, took my captivated fancy ; a tiny figurine from Tanagra, bangled as to wrists, strings of antique gold coins round her neck, miniature jacket of pink silk, flounced skirt of gauzy whiteness, glossily shining hair, aigrette surmounted, eyes of penetrating lustre,—and the whole not three feet high. Again and yet again, not once, but many times, would we see that dance.

The boys were a delight also. As was proper to their sex their doings were martial ; with small sticks, beating one on the other, they attack and counter-attack ; they wheel, and whirl, again to attack and counter-attack ; and, all the time, the steady, insistent, drum. Add as background a tapestry-hung room, teak-pillared, curious, quaint ; dignified yet approving spectators ; and without, sunlight flooding a courtyard flanked by ancient, white-faced, buildings, scene of so many other and similar doings in the years that are gone.

Now we make ready for the journey to the Hills, for the good sport there, we devoutly trust, to be found. Theobald, from Mysore, hunter of fame, Vithalrao and Hakim, from Baroda, shikaris tested and proven, have joined

us ; rifles have been over-hauled, cartridges seen and approved ; the Raja, prodigal always in hospitality, has erected villages for our reception, and five hundred of his men have been busy for weeks making straight for our feet the crooked places. It has stopped raining, and the sun shines cheerfully on a verdant world ; trackers are on the heels of elephants which they declare are yonder in the forests in abundance. All is hopeful anticipation.

CHAPTER II

THE ANAMALIS—ELEPHANT AND BISON

WE DEPART FOR THE HILLS: THE VILLAGE CALLED “THE HUNTERS’ NEW HOME”: THE PHOTOGRAPHER AND HIS CONVEYANCE: A PICTURESQUE STREAM AND FERRY: THE THEKKADI CAMP: THE HUNTERS DEPART: ELEPHANTS ARE SIGHTED: AND KILLED: THE MAHARAJA’S GOOD SHOT: CONGRATULATIONS AND REJOICINGS: A KADIR VILLAGE: SNAKES AND SCORPIONS: WE MOVE CAMP: HER HIGHNESS SHOOTS A BISON.

June 28.

We have arrived at “the home of the elephant,” for such is the interpretation of Anamalis as are called the hills wherein is pitched our camp. It conveys but little to say we have arrived; needs must I dwell on some details of a journey full of incident and memorable experience.

We left Kollengode this afternoon in the motors, Their Highnesses leading the way in the Rolls-Royce, their host seated with them, Shamrao in attendance; the rest followed in cars not so impervious to shock, to sustain a spine-torturing shaking over thirty miles of potholes and ravines, and other refinements of the

roadmaker's art. Somewhat I exaggerate, for the way was not all bad. Allow something for the aches and pains which still possess me as I write.

At a village bearing the appalling name of Vettakavenpudhur, which we discover, however, to be one of good omen for our expedition, to mean "the hunters' new home," we halt to give the good folk of the district the opportunity of a glimpse of Their Highnesses for which they had petitioned. Clean swept roads, neat houses of solid construction, red-tiled, green-gardened; stalwart man, fair women, and handsome children in attentively silent crowds; green of the fields extending towards the yet deeper green of forest-covered foot-hills; still higher, blacks and browns of bare rock, jagged peaks, sharp cut against a brilliant background of infinitely blue sky. A genuinely hearty, yet entirely reverent, greeting, set in a perfect scene.

We come to Settumada, to have tea in the Forest Bungalow, to take manjil and chair, to proceed, swaying on the strong shoulders of the lusty men of Kollengode, our complaisant carriers. The manjil is best described as a hammock suspended to a long pole; cautiously

you stretch long limbs thereon; if, in your ignorance, anxious to see something of the passing show, you attempt to raise your head, the pole salutes it with stunning effect; if, on the other hand, you remain recumbent, you either slumber the happy hours away, as did our Doctor, or cramp seizes you. In the acquirement of the manjil habit, long experience and a natural aptitude are necessary. Possessing neither, I speedily abandoned the conveyance, preferring to walk, as also did Nimbalkar, and—when he had succeeded in compelling his carriers to a halt—Burke, the photographer. The plight of the latter was a great amusement to us, obviously not so to him. Having selected—as he thought with great cunning—an ancient chair, bound by the ends of its legs to bamboo poles, he led the way, high above the heads of his carriers, and of us who admired, even as the idol is taken in procession through village and town by the devout. The track was greasy from recent rain, the porters slipped and staggered under their burden of artistic genius; in endearing terms Burke appealed that they should use more care, go slowly—all to no purpose, for they understood him to be urging them on to fresh exertion,

hurried the more, the pathos of his adjurations becoming every moment more urgent.

A wonderful, if difficult walk. Eight miles of climbing, now steep, now easy, through glades shaded by bamboo and teak, along sandy water-courses, to rise high, to descend sharply, to rise again, brought us at evening to a mountain stream, crossed on a ferry of bamboo branches, the ferryman hauling on a rope of cane made fast to tree trunks on either side the water. It was a pretty picture. A swiftly flowing rivulet, twenty or thirty feet across, boulder dotted; leisurely little men, carriers and porters, staying in mid-stream to enjoy to the full the coolness so grateful after the heat of the way; and, bending to kiss the surface, shadowy thickets of bamboo, most graceful of grasses. On rising ground close by is the camp of Thekkadi, in its centre a picturesque little chalet for the Maharaja and Maharani; the walls are covered with rich silks, mud floors are concealed by carpets of price, lamps are generously shaded, all is comfort and convenience; and all made by the Kadirs, the people of the Hills, from bamboos, with no other tools than bill-hook and mallet, their work, of course, supplemented by necessary provision of decorations and

furniture. And, *mutatis mutandis*, the same arrangements for the Staff, housed at a little distance in a series of huts, side by side.

Theobald is discussing the art of the hunter with Their Highnesses; a dinner of excellent savour has been enjoyed; in the verandah, under spirals of fragrance from cigar and cigarette, tales of derring-do pass from chair to chair ; beyond, in those dimly-outlined hills, are elephants—the imagination dwells on the idea.

June 29.

A great day, to be heavily red-lettered in memory, the day of the killing of elephants, of the breaking of a record; for I dare swear that our Maharani is the first in history to stalk and kill an elephant—and on foot.

The morning dawned fine and clear, with wonderful colour effects on the trees and surrounding hills which environ us as in a cup the edges of which have here and there been broken. Strips of vivid green high above tell of forest clearings in which, at times, with powerful binoculars, it is possible to see from hence elephants or bison in herds.

The trackers were in very early, quaint little bushy-haired men, aboriginal of type, with a

genius for their work. Distant howls one heard all night were signals from trackers on watch over the elephants to others stationed lower down, transmitting the information that the three tuskers which have been marked down for weeks are still there within reach.

Instant were the preparations, all was soon in readiness, and Theobald without delay led the line across the ferry, and on to the mysterious depths of a tropical forest. The Maharaja and Maharani started in manjils, to walk very soon, escorted by the Raja, who had never before penetrated so far into his family estates. More than that he is the first of his family to visit his forests.

Some of us, at starting, experience an unwonted quivering of nerves as we look ahead to the heights where dwells Behemoth, whom we dare audaciously to beard in his own retreat. Except Theobald, none of us know more of elephants than is gained from occasional visits to a circus, or the contemplation of them when tamed and submissive. But we have all read; and, for myself, the reading of the fearsome deeds of rogues has increased a respect for them already uncomfortably great.

In and out of clumps of feathery bamboos, whose cracklings in the morning breeze remind of the crashing charge or retreat of the forest monarch we are to meet; up and down steep tracks, where the bare-footed Mulsers and Kadirs are at an advantage over us booted people, who ever slip and skate as we go; by the edge of rippling streams, past deep pools smiling in sunlight, or silent in shade, the trees concealing nymphs and goddesses whose toilet our passing has disturbed; on—and on—and then suddenly a halt. The non-combatants are to wait here until further orders, Theobald having all the hunter's contempt for mere men of peace, insisting, for instance, that a camera is not a desirable adjunct to the stalking of wild beasts. As no one knows what dreadful fate may overtake him who disobeys, even Burke consents to be left behind here; the group, as it stands disconsolate under the relentless gaze of Nimbalkar, a grim warrior with rifle over arm, is suggestive of the Arena, of timid captives, centurion-guarded, awaiting the order, "throw them to the elephants."

The rest of the party go on slowly, for the way is not easy, until another halt is ordered some two miles from the first; by this time

excitement has become painfully intense. A short whispered consultation between Theobald and trackers, a warning passed round against any kind of noise, and our mentor moves stealthily forward, to be swallowed up immediately by the tall elephant grass, and the ever present bamboo. We wait—and wait! Several eternities later—perhaps about five minutes—a little tracker suddenly appears from nowhere, rises from the ground, as it were beckons us on ; stealthily we proceed, counting heart beats as we go, Their Highnesses leading. Theobald meets us, we halt; he has viewed the elephants, and now makes his final dispositions. The Raja and his attendants wait here; the Maharaja and Maharani, with Theobald, Hakim and Vithalrao, followed by gun carriers and shikaris, go on. Cautiously the party follows the trackers; no one speaks, to breathe is almost a sin, a stumble would, without doubt, be a crime of deepest dye ; the moment approaches. Theobald, who leads, halts, beckons the Maharaja, and points ; presently the Maharani joins them, and after her the rest.

There are the elephants, three of them. One, a swart majesty, glistening from recent bathing, nobly tusked, stands between two

smaller, but sufficiently large, companions. At a guess they are eighty yards away, almost at the summit of the hill we have been painfully climbing; hidden from us by the high grass save for heads and shoulders, with leisured dignity, they are strolling forward, feeding as they go. Suddenly signs of uneasiness appear, they have heard or scented enemies, or some wonderful instinct has told them of lurking danger, three trunks are raised in air, feeling for information. A tracker whispers to Theobald, who passes the information on; the big fellow is a tyrant of the hills, a rogue, with man-murder against him; wanton in destruction he has killed two of the Raja's men a few days back; doubtless his companions will develop the same tastes if they keep his company.

Foot by foot, inch by inch, with hunter's caution and skill, Theobald takes his charges nearer and nearer the elephants now below, until, at long last, the Maharaja is but thirty yards from his quarry, the Maharani a pace behind him. Follows again a period of nervous waiting for those who watch. Suppose the shot misses, suppose all three view the party and charge—suppose a hundred and one things. The Maharaja raises his .500, takes

aim, we listen for the report, watch the elephant, hardly breathe ; but the mark is not good enough, the rifle is lowered, His Highness joins the Maharani, the rest of us waiting and watching close at hand. Again the rifle is raised, again lowered ; the huge beast half-conscious of hostile presences has again moved. At last the time comes, the rifle is rested against a convenient forked bough, a shot rings out, disturbing a thousand echoes, frightening a thousand birds. The rogue, his race run, staggers, falls, rolls over on ponderous side, the loudly rustling grass falling in swathes under him, struggles, and—is dead. The Maharaja had aimed true, his bullet entering the brain through the ear-hole. Her Highness, firing at the smaller beast, a second or two after the Maharaja's shot had sounded, hit him, but did not kill at once, it requiring a second well directed bullet to send him, beating the grass under him like some gigantic reaper, dying down the hill. It was not easy to follow him, for the jungle was thick and steep, all but impenetrable ; we found him later, stiffly suspended in most extraordinary fashion across the trunk of a tree which bridged a small ravine, densely covered by bamboo.

I need say nothing of the congratulations and rejoicings ; nor need I tell of the gratitude of the forest dwellers, picturesquely expressed in voice and gesticulation, relieved of an ever-present terror to their goings and comings by night and by day. The mighty has fallen, the evil doer, the murderer, has met with fitting punishment, has been laid low. Burke, breathing as one who finishes a three-mile race, so fast has he come, rushes up, his cameras snapping like miniature machine guns ; and the Maharaja is photographed in approved style, standing on the enemy which, stuffed and set up, is destined to excite the wonder and admiration of the citizens of Baroda whenever they go to the Museum, to tell them and their children of the prowess of their ruler with the rifle.

All has been perfect, the skill of the hunters undeniable, the watchful care of our host all providing. We return, well satisfied with the fruits of our labours, to feast right royally, toasting the Maharaja, the Maharani, and the Raja who is, I am convinced, more delighted with the success of his guests, than if it had fallen to his own lot to bring the elephants down. Measurements taken return the big rogue as standing 10·6 at the shoulder, while

his tusks weigh 97 pounds : Her Highness's elephant stood just under 9, with tusks smaller in proportion.

June 30.

The weather remains delightful, occasional showers, and the floating masses of vapour which now and then veil the tops of the peaks, alone reminding us that this is the Monsoon season. Early this morning the Dewan and I accompanied Theobald to the scene of yesterday's exploits. He had to go to give orders to his skinners, and, in a moment of rashness, I said I would go too. It certainly was a splendid walk, sometimes a crawl, even as yesterday's was ; but we were quicker to-day, having no stalking to do. A curious thing in these jungles is the number of rounded black rocks, isolated in the midst of the jungle, at first sight for all the world like the rounded back of an elephant in the distance ; modesty—or is it vanity?—prevents my relating how often I suddenly stayed my steps at sight of these rocks, thinking that my dreams were to come true after all, that I was to be chased headlong by a rogue. And then, after familiarity with this experience had hardened my heart,

and I had begun to survey the scene with the calm eye proper to the bold pioneer, we actually did come across an elephant! It was tame—but how was I to know that?

We got wet through, saw some delightful scenery, had some splendid exercise, and acquired a keen edge to already sufficiently satisfactory appetites.

This afternoon we visited a neighbouring Kadir village, our unexpected arrival causing a flutter in many a bamboo hut. Simple unaffected people, these Kadirs of the forests and hills, the men clad in rude toga and breech clout, the women, comely enough, usually nude above the waist, but at sight of the strangers concealing their charms hastily. Willingly enough the population consent to be photographed, the shy emerging from their retreats at call of the more bold. They must suffer much from malaria, these dwellers in damp forests, and the doctor, medically inquisitive, finds a very high percentage of enlarged spleens amongst the children. In the centre of the village stands a larger building—the translator called it 'the club'—in which sleep, under guard of the elder men, the village bachelors, presumably that the hot

blood of youth may be under due restraint ; here too are entertained the communal guests. Most of the men I saw were married ; they are easily distinguished by the fact that the middle top teeth have been chipped away to a sharp point with chisel and mallet—a rough and ready way of encouraging men to marry. Surrounding the village are deep elephant pits. To be thus trapped must be an uncomfortable experience for the elephant, for he falls head-first, and is left there till quiet enough to be hauled out in comparative safety. It must be an interesting operation to watch from a distance.

In the intervals of forest tramps the camp is the scene of some measure of occasional excitement. Yesterday a six-foot cobra was caught and killed in the act of trying to make itself at home in Theobald's bed ; a snake skin has just been discovered by the perturbed Nimbalkar on the floor of his bath room ; and a scorpion of extraordinary dimensions was obliterated a few minutes ago in the verandah. These however are but ordinary incidents ; even the watchful care of our noble host cannot have the success which attended Saint Patrick where snakes and scorpions are concerned. But—I have

given strict orders as to the examination of my hut and its contents before I enter it to-night. When reptiles are added to rogue elephants!—

July 2. Kachithody.

The party left Thekkadi yesterday morning, very early, a caravan of manjils and chairs, furniture and baggage, kitchen supplies and cartridge boxes, guns and bath tubs, porters, gun-bearers and trackers. A beautifully fine morning again pointed the truth of the assertion that, as to weather, Their Highnesses are royally fortunate. A journey of five miles or so, through typical forest scenes comparatively open, brought us to this new camp, laid out with that attentive care which distinguishes everything the Raja has done for us.

There had been hopes of encountering bison on our way, for the trackers reported their presence in great numbers; but it was high noon when we reached our destination, and they are not often to be seen late in the morning. The trackers came in soon after, to tell of them within two miles of the camp, and the Maharaja and Maharani went out in the afternoon in search; but, though a herd was seen, it contained

no shootable bull. It was therefore determined to make a very early start this morning.

A tramp through park-like country, free from undergrowth, profusely covered by teak and bamboo, brought us to tracks which Theobald pronounced to be fresh, and to be followed. As they divided the party separated, Theobald and Hakim accompanying Her Highness, while Vithalrao and a shikari went with the Maharaja. The fortune of the day proved to be with the Maharani, for, a mile or so on, still other tracks, this time of a solitary bull, were found. For two miles these were followed, to lead the party to the spot where he was grazing in company with two others. The big head was furthest away, and the difficulty was to get within shot of him without alarming any of the three. Cautious and careful stalking from tree to tree brought the Maharani eventually within a hundred yards, at which distance she fired, the bull galloping hard away. At first it was thought that he had escaped unhurt, but blood tracks proved that he had been wounded, and deeply. These were followed for half a mile or more; nothing was to be seen, though all peered in every direction. At last Theobald saw a red eye and a lashing tail

behind a tree trunk; the brute was stalking the bulls. He fired twice, but the shots were not decisive, it being found presently that they had taken effect in chest and hindquarters. Swiftly again the bison fled, again to take cover behind a tree.

This time Her Highness managed to approach him quite closely, fired, and hit him in the shoulder. He dropped, lay struggling, and two shots in the head finished him. His horns were $32\frac{1}{2}$ spread, an excellent trophy. He too will presently stand in the Baroda Museum.

Meanwhile the Maharaja had, for once, no luck. The bulls seen were always almost out of range, difficult stalks, while the visual conditions were unfavourable. To-morrow we return to Kollengode by way of Thekkadi, where His Highness is feasting the kindly hill people who have helped in the shikar, with their relatives and friends, eight hundred or so in all.

A splendid place for a hunter, this. Ibex on the rugged peaks, elephant, bison, and bear in the forests, sambhar and spotted deer to be had for the trouble of going out with a rifle; but Their Highnesses must on, for engagements in the next week or two are very heavy.

July 4. Kollengode.

We came back yesterday evening in triumph; for Their Highnesses' achievements in the Hills have been noised abroad far and wide, and all and sundry of the neighbourhood were determined to witness their return. Nimbalkar and I had come on ahead, as also had the Dewan Saheb; and I, idly walking the streets, encountered sword bearers, brandishing shields of ancient pattern, gaiety and holiday upon their countenances, as upon those of all I saw; at the Palace gate a uniformed sepoy, a medal on his breast—Burmah, 1887—speaking to honourable service; with dignified gestures he kept his post. Within the ladies of the family gave last instructions to a small choir of girls whose mission it was to sing odes of congratulatory welcome what time the distinguished guests arrived, their laurels thick upon them. Presently a distant tumult, growing ever louder; the advance guard of the crowd looking backwards as they ran; elephants and exploding petards; sword bearers and banner carriers; and Their Highnesses' car at last. A welcome to be remembered.

Bethink you. If in Scottish Highlands, with much ceremony, they hail the slayer of

the stag, with what rejoicings will they here greet those who come from the destroying of a rogue elephant? Remembering this, you will be able to form a mental picture of the arrival at the Palace last evening. It is fortunate, too, that I have been converted to an appreciation of the tom-tom; for it was there in full force to greet the safe return.

Some music by the ladies in the Old Palace after dinner was offered to, and much appreciated by, Their Highnesses. Worry there has been for them in receipt of news of Prince Dharyashil's motor accident near Bangalore; fortunately, however, later telegrams, reporting his complete escape from harm, reached them at the same time as those notifying the accident itself.

To-morrow we must say farewell to the Raja and his ladies. It would be difficult adequately to describe the length and breadth of the hospitality he has shown us, from Their Highnesses to the most humble of their party. Ere the chronicler leaves the subject of Kollengode, regretfully admitting the impossibility of doing it justice, let him put on record the fact that we are all very grateful, very pleased, very sorry to say farewell to such rare kindness.

CHAPTER III

COCHIN

WE LEAVE KOLLENGODE: PALGHAT: TRICHUR: THE VEDAKKUMNATHAN DEVASWOM: MERRY LODGE: ARRIVAL AT ERNACULAM AND BOLGHETTY: COCHIN APPEALS TO THE IMAGINATION: SO DOES BOLGHETTY: MUTTANCHERRY, ITS CORONATION PALACE, ITS JEWS, HOSPITAL, AND PEOPLE: THE CHURCH A RELIC OF PORTUGUESE SPLENDOUR: THE STATE OFFICES: THE GOUD SARASWAT BRAHMINS: A GARDEN PARTY: DINNER AT THE RESIDENCY: WE LEAVE COCHIN.

July 5. Ernaculam.

THIS morning, as we sleepily surveyed a moist world at an absurdly early hour, we became conscious of impending changes; growing sensibility made us aware of need for instant haste, for a special train had to be caught at Shoranur, and the shouting and tumult below our windows indicated that all was ready for departure—save the voyagers. In depressed mood then, we complete preparations, descend, to be bundled hastily into our appointed corners, to be in motion ere yet we have said farewell to Kollengode, to hurtle through wet streets in a monotonously

bellowing motor. A long string of bullock carts on the narrow road compels a stop ; more reiteration of complaint from the horn ; streaming of rain oozing through the joints in our harness ; vehemence of language from the cart drivers as they pull and push. In the end we are away again, to pass villages and towns, schools and police stations, dispensaries and hospitals ; to leap in air as we surmount road obstacles, to sway with violence as we swing round corners, or avoid wandering animals, to crawl through thickly crowded streets, occasionally delaying to ask the way. We notice that the men of a certain village point towards our car with gesticulation ; there is no time to stop for inquiries ; we discover later that a particularly large bundle, which had commenced the journey secured to the roof, is no longer there, has dropped into the road. No matter : there are other cars following, they will retake the deserter. Comes a brief digression at Palghat, to view, superficially enough, Fort, Hospital, and public buildings ; a great pity we cannot delay, for this is no inconsiderable town, second largest in the district, with an interesting history. The Fort, for instance, which we enter over a draw-bridge through massive

ramparts, to drive round, not staying for satisfaction of antiquarian longings ; it was built by Haider to secure his communications what time he marched from Coimbatore to storm and sack the cities of the Coast. Colonel Fullarton, who took it by assault, describes it, with deliciously naive modesty, as " a place of the first strength in India " ; it was then only held for eleven days, to be evacuated, and occupied by the Zamorin's troops.

The redoubtable Tippu found it necessary to take it, in his turn, guarding as it did, and does, the Pass through the Ghats. He, or his local commander, had a vein of ruthlessly sardonic humour. Pressed for time, not wishing to risk the loss of his own men involved in an assault, he hit on a means to compel a speedy surrender :—

Tippu's soldiers did not trouble to lay regular siege to the Fort, but contented themselves with exposing daily the heads of many Brahmins in the sight of the defenders. ' Rather than witness such enormities ', it is said, ' the Zamorin chose to abandon Palghatcherry.'

In 1790, the Fort, then mounting sixty guns, was re-captured by the British who, however, did not adopt Tippu's methods.

We enter now on a stretch of country which in other days has witnessed the marching and counter-marching of countless armies. To Tippu the modern traveller should give tribute of passing thanks ; for the roads on which his motor travels, with speed and comparative smoothness, were constructed by that martial spirit for the transport of his guns and columns of supply. Curious how the arts of war in all countries have developed those of peace. All great military commanders, from Hannibal to Napoleon, have deserved well of the world, in one sense at least, in that they have created, and left for our present use, arteries of inter-communication for the peoples.

So we come at length to Shoranur, cross a long bridge over wide waters, to find a special train, and officers of the Cochin State awaiting us.

A few sentences of greeting, garlands, and flowers in profusion ; we have become guests of Cochin, and are on our way to Trichur, where we fall into the capably energetic hands of Mr. Davies, Director of Instruction to the State, specially deputed to watch over the comfort of Their Highnesses during their sojourn as guests of His Highness the Raja. On

the platform, a guard of honour, and effusive official welcome, without crowds of people, in holiday attire and mood, throng decorated streets, give an unofficial greeting, spontaneous and hearty.

At the station Their Highnesses were met by His Highness the ex-Raja, Sir Rama Varma, and by the Dewan of Cochin, with other officers of high standing. Motors drive us to the Residency, a stately building set in picturesque surroundings, used in these latter days as a residence for the Dewan when he happens Trichur-wards. Close by, in severe rectangular austerity, stands the Vadakkumnathan Devaswom, a temple with a more than local fame. Parasu Rama, having annihilated the Kshatryas twenty-one times, journeyed to the Himalayas, there to expiate his offence by prayer and meditation. Brahmins visited him, solicited alms ; he, alas, had none to give, yet could by no means refuse. With the help of Varuna, Kerala was reclaimed by him, and handed over to the Brahmins in perpetuity Siva was invited to visit the new territory. On the way thither with Parvathi, both seated on the Bull, they were compelled to rest, to settle at Trichur. The temple stands on the place of

their resting. It is a wealthy fane for, in other days, Brahmins, wishing to enjoy their wealth and at the same time preserve their good repute, would dedicate all they possessed to the temple, preserving only the usufruct.

A drive round the town, and a visit to the house of the Raja of Kollengode, who has built here a residence for his daughter who, under the matriarchate, belongs to another family than her father's; a visit also to "Merry Lodge," delightful place in which His Highness the ex-Raja spends days of leisured ease after the stress of rule ; tea at the Residency, and back to the train. Two hours later we are here at Ernakulam, to be met by all that is high placed in Cochin society, guards of honour, bands, and the inevitable crowds. Decorated launches are ready, and the party goes across to Bolghatty, escorted by the ever-cheerful "snake boats," eyed by us, who have never seen such things before, with delighted curiosity.

Mr. and Mrs. Davies met Their Highnesses on the Bolghatty Jetty, the latter showing the Maharani her rooms, explaining the details of the history of the Residency. His Highness

of Cochin, who has received Their Highnesses at the station, and accompanied them to Bolghatty, takes his departure ; the Dewan and I, for whom accommodation is provided on the mainland, are transported in swift launches, which are ever going backwards and forwards, with hootings reminiscent of Port Said, and the noises thereof ; and the Island gradually sinks to rest, while the curtain of night is drawn over the darkening waters of the lagoons.

July 6.

I write in a room of the delightful Guest House at Ernaculam, happily placed, flag-staff surmounted, on the shore of monsoon troubled waters. Semi-circular wise they stretch around ; on the far side, cocoanut palms in green abundance form an effective background to Cochin with its red roofs ; beyond, a line of white headed breakers denotes the bar, and the open sea. On the right, almost opposite is Bolghatty, in days of old a Dutch colonial mansion, more recently the occasional home of the Resident in Travancore and Cochin, now the temporary abode of Their Highnesses the Maharaja and Maharani Gaekwar.

Romance is here in abundance. Remembering that Cochin is the earliest European settlement in India, one has no need of spurs to the imagination ; there, before one's eyes, the Portuguese fleet under Cabral, famous admiral, anchored in December, 1500, second of the expeditions sent by His Majesty of Portugal to carry further the investigations of Vasco Da Gama ; a few years later, Da Gama landed himself, and signed a treaty with the Raja ; d'Albuquerque built here, in 1503, the first European fort in India, by name Manuel, so-called after the then King of Portugal. St. Francis Xavier passed through Cochin on his way to his mission at Cape Comorin ; here the first book printed in India was produced by the Jesuits ; here the English traveller and adventurer, Ralph Fitch, stayed after his journey to India *via* Baghdad and the Gulf ; here the East India Company built a factory in 1634, with Portuguese permission. How are the mighty fallen ! Who thinks of Portugal now when permission is sought to start a new company, a new industry ?

After the Portuguese came the Dutch, who were here for 132 years, and are said to have

improved the town greatly. About them thus the Malabar Gazetteer :—

In rebuilding the fort they took great care to leave the old Portuguese streets, now called by Dutch names, standing. The most important streets at that time were de Linde (Lime) Straat; Heere (Gentleman's) Straat; de Peterceelie Straat (Parsely Street); de Bree Straat (Broad Street); de Smee Straat (Smithe's Street); de Osse Straat (Ox Street); de Burgen Straat (Burghers Street); and de Calven Straat (Calf Street).

The Dutch garrisoned Cochin with five hundred and thirty Europeans, and thirty-seven natives. Day in his *Land of the Perumals*, says :—

The reduction in power caused the Dutch to fall considerably in the estimation of the natives, and they became but little feared by the surrounding people.

As a matter of fact the European troops were rarely above one-quarter Dutch. The remainder "were composed of English and French deserters, renegade Germans, and similar broken-down adventurers, who came for the purpose of making or mending their fortunes."

British Cochin passed into the hands of the English in 1795.

As to Bolghatty. Wide expanses of lawns of softest green, shady trees, paths of

milk-white sand, specially brought from a port twelve miles away, a lofty mansion whose deep embrasured windows give views of land and water, whose lofty pillared verandahs give ample shade ; here all the resources of hospitable Cochin have been brought into play to make it, what it assuredly is, an ideal residence for guests of high distinction. One peoples the great house with ghosts of long departed Dutch Governors, merchants and soldiers, grandees of all kinds, and their dames and children ; as the trees rustle in the monsoon breezes one imagines the centuries which have gone, all the changes they have brought, stirring incidents of high romance, court ceremonial, tragedy and comedy, in all of which those who dwelt herein played their parts.

Two motor launches are passing ; they are gaily bedecked with flags and bunting, and have, as consorts, two snake boats, each propelled by the paddles of fifty men who raise cheerful chanty as they go. One stands insecure in the bows, addresses to the surroundings a stirring solo, while his crew respond in joyous unison at the tops of their voices, their paddles beating the water strenuously the while. Their Highnesses are on their way to

return the visit paid them this morning by His Highness the Raja of Cochin at Bolghatty.

They go to the Hill Palace, perched on a lofty rock, high above the town and lakes.

The programme for the visit to Cochin is necessarily very crowded, indeed uncomfortably so, for we have to do in one day what should occupy months ; I anticipate with some discomfort an attack of severe mental indigestion.

Their Highnesses had an ovation from the people, as apart from the official welcome, both at Trichur and at Ernakulam. Especially were they delighted to catch a glimpse of the Maharani, whose fame as a huntress of big game has spread far and wide. Hear the *Cochin Argus* on the subject :—

The women folk of this town are excited and alarmed to hear that Her Highness the Maharani, during her shooting expedition in Venganad Hills in Malabar with her royal consort, shot a 9-foot tusker. This is no doubt a fact, but the Indian women cannot believe it.

One would like to hear the conversation in local households on this point ; yet the surprise felt by the ladies of Ernakulam is understandable, for it will doubtless be shared by most of their sex.

At the conclusion of the visit of His Highness the Raja to Their Highnesses this morning, the party crossed by launch, always accompanied by snake boats, to Muttancherry, or native Cochin, opposite Ernaculam. Here, at a gaily decorated jetty, we were met by Cochin officers, by a huge crowd, restrained by zealous police, the ancient, weather-beaten walls of the Coronation Palace serving as a background. Externally a somewhat commonplace building, preserving the architectural ideals of the Portuguese who built it in 1550, handing it over as a present to the Raja, in grateful recognition of the protection and favour he had shown them, internally it is quaint indeed ; mural paintings, though faded and worn, still visibly portray intimate domestic happenings with a frankness which belongs to centuries other than ours ; an ever-burning lamp, archaic of pattern, marks the spot where three predecessors of the Raja were buried, within the walls. From the semi-darkness of the rooms of the Palace we emerge into a brilliancy of sunshine which hurts the eyes, and move on to visit the White Jews. A high antique gateway, and, through it, a paved courtyard where pigeons strut and preen ;

beyond is the Synagogue, crowned with a clock-tower, a curious sundial on its side. Ere we enter the building, we glance to the left to see a long, narrow lane, half in deep shadow, half in full light, bordered by lofty, many-windowed, houses whence peer inquisitively faces of white women and children of the Dispersion, some of them fair to ruddiness. It is the Ghetto of Cochin, home of the descendants of those who, driven into exile after the fall of Jerusalem, found here hospitable asylum in a far country.

Within the Synagogue we are shown a wonderful floor of china tiles, each story-telling, each a miracle of blue colouring, hundreds of years old; an ancient Rabbi, in all detail worthy to be a Zangwill hero, shows us the original copperplate inscribed with the deed of gift which, in the eighth century, was given to one Joseph Rabbin, endowing him and his descendants with various rights and privileges to be by them enjoyed "as long as the moon shall rise upon the earth," putting them on terms of equality with the Naduvazhi chiefs. At that time the Jews were settled at Cranganore, then a harbour of such standing that its mariners might have been met with in far-off Rome, now

a hamlet, known only as the scene of an annual Cock Festival of more than doubtful decency; there they lived on terms of peaceful amity and mutual respect with their Hindu neighbours and friends for hundreds of years. But in 1550 there came a Pharoah who knew not Moses, in the shape of the Portuguese, to whom ancient charters and vested rights were as nothing compared with religious antagonism, who especially hated the Jew. The day of the Hebrew in Cranganore was numbered. After bitter persecution, which doubtless differed only in detail from countless others, the ancient colony was scattered, the homes of their fathers knew them no more. Shelter they sought, and obtained, in many places in Cochin and Travancore, especially here in Muttancherry. Since that disastrous time they have lived in peace, free to follow their bent, but in recent years have fallen off lamentably in prosperity. They are now, in fact, a fast failing people, decadent, easy victims to the local curse, elephantiasis, or "Cochin leg", several distressing examples of which are plainly to be seen as we pass. The White Jews, whom we have just visited, have as poor neighbours—they refuse to acknowledge their claim to be treated as poor

relations—the Black Jews. There are also Brown Jews, with their own Synagogue. The Black and Brown say they were the first settlers on the Coast, and that the darkness of their complexion is due to intermixture with Indian blood, and to long residence in the Tropics; to which the White scornfully make answer that the Black and Brown are merely the offspring of slaves, bought by their ancestors and converted to Judaism.

Modern scientific enquiry does not support this contention. There is in existence a tombstone of the Black Jews six hundred years old, while the oldest of the White is only two hundred; the Synagogue of the former dates from 1344, that of the latter from 1666; and the copperplate charter already referred to mentions the grantee, Joseph Rabbin, who, according to the record books of both communities, came from Yemen in Arabia; the presumption is that his complexion would not be that of the White Jews.

“According to Dr. Buchanan, they (the White Jews) had only the Bible written on parchment, and of modern appearance in their Synagogue, and he managed to get from the Black Jews much older manuscripts written on parchments, goat’s skin and cotton

paper. Regarding the Black Jews, he says, 'It is only necessary to look to their countenance to be satisfied that their ancestors must have arrived in India many ages before the White Jews. Their Hindu complexion, and their very imperfect resemblance to the European Jews indicate that they have been detached from the parent stock in Judæa many ages before the Jews in the West, and that there have been marriages not Israelitish. . . . The real ancient Jews. . . . are the Black Jews, the descendants probably of Judæa Arabians and Indian proselytes.'

Krishna Aiyar. "*The Cochin Tribes and Castes.*"

Whatever be the truth in a vexed question, surely Romance exists here in this corner of India. Yearly the Jews, whether Black or White, dressed in deepest mourning, with wailings and tears lament the fall of the Holy City. The daughters of Jerusalem, weep ye for them ; they have had to wander far, weeping as they go.

Back from the Ghetto to India, a matter merely of passing out into the main street. We get into carriages and are driven very slowly through the dense crowds. Their Highnesses spent an interested quarter of an hour at the Women and Children's Hospital, guided round the wards by Dr. Coombes, the Chief Medical Officer, and Mrs. Mervyn Smith, the Lady

Doctor in charge. On again, suddenly to be greeted in a place of narrow streets by shrill cheering, and a song of welcome in Gujarati. Here in Cochin there is a large and prosperous colony of Gujarati speaking folk; their children, in school assembled, are greeting the Maharaja and Maharani of Baroda. "Hip! Hip! Hurrah!" shout the boys and girls, a genuine, if exotic, welcome from little people; and their parents think, perhaps, as Their Highnesses come, of far-off homes.

On again, past wharves whence trade is done in spices and splendours to all the world, over a canal, and we are in British Cochin. Past warehouses and banks, speaking of wealth and commerce, we go on towards the sea, to make a brief halt at the Cathedral-like Church of St. Francis, ancient Portuguese foundation, whose walls bear stones commemorating the titles, families, and virtues of knights and grantees who found peace here, far from home, long ago. Now it is the English Church, and in it, surrounded, one would imagine, by many an unseen witness of another faith, the good Protestants of Cochin meet to worship. Facing the sea and the call of the west wind, the Church is a monument

to the decay of earthly ambition, to the former greatness of Portugal amongst the nations.

We drove on by the Beach Road, past a lofty lighthouse, to return by another route to the Jetty, and so back to Bolghatty.

After the visit to the Hill Palace mentioned above, His Highness returned to Bolghatty for tea, and later, accompanied by the Dewan, and the rest of his suite, visited the State Offices, the District and Chief Courts, the College and the General Hospital. The next engagement was the garden party at the Durbar Hall ; but an unofficial appointment had first to be kept. The Goud Saraswat Brahmins of Ernakulam, whose original home was in the Konkan, have Marathi as their literary language, and had invited His Highness to an entertainment at their school, the Subraya Pai Memorial. Most delightful to see the boys and girls of all ages in the foreground, their fathers and mothers in the background, supporting the elders of the community in pleased welcome to the premier Maratha ruler of India ; and, one is sure, it gave His Highness equal pleasure. Indeed, in the short Marathi speech with which he brought the proceedings to a close, he expressed this in

warm terms. Then on to the garden party at which all Ernaculam society, including some most picturesque friars and priests, were present to share in the hospitality of the Raja of Cochin. Tea and other refreshments were in ready abundance in the verandahs upstairs, a bright programme of music was played by the State Band and we enjoyed things vastly. A crowded day was brought to a close by a dinner at the Residency where a number of Europeans had the opportunity of meeting Their Highnesses. As the launches bringing the invited guests pant their hurrying way across the lagoon to Bolghatty, the curving lines of the shores are outlined in flickering flames from myriad torches ; over the dark waters the yellow lights have a weird effect indeed.

July 7.

In spite of a cloudless dawn—and I would I might attempt a description of the wonders of a sunrise over the lagoons which comfort Ernaculam—rain was falling at the time fixed for our start from Bolghatty, and falling with a zeal which reminded of the prophecies of those who had foretold incessant bad weather

for our tour hereabouts in this season. First appeared a cloud, no bigger than a man's hand, from out the sea to the west ; it widened and deepened, advanced very slowly, a rainbow ever preceding it over the water's surface ; finally the storm broke on my devoted head as I crouched in the cabin of the launch on my way to Bolghatty. We were to start at 8, and His Highness the Raja, with his Heads of Departments, arrived some minutes earlier to bid farewell, to accompany Their Highnesses on their way as far as Ernaculam. The rain thrashed down on flags and banners, on guards of honour and band, on the gorgeously uniformed retainers of the Cochin State, exposed to its pleasantry ; but the sun came out, the clouds passed, and we embarked, each on his appointed vessel, in fine weather. There are two large launches, in one of which Their Highnesses are to travel—it is the fastest on the Backwaters ; and in the other, Nimbalker and I, with baggage and servants, settle down for the fourteen hours journey. There are, besides, a host of smaller craft, all provided for us by our hosts of Travancore, who have sent agents on ahead to assure themselves that all goes well. We are told that a refreshment

boat lies waiting some distance away, breakfast ready ; all we have to do for the rest of the day is to sit at ease on comfortable chairs and couches, observe the beauty of the passing scene, reflect and moralise in reason, and congratulate ourselves that we travel not as do those others who occasionally pass in crowded passenger-boats. whistles frantically blowing. A gun, another and another, twenty-one of them. The Maharaja has started. We follow in a long line, we say farewell to Cochin. Nothing could have been more generously kind than the welcome we have received, every one of us, from the officers and people of Cochin ; the arrangements ordered by His Highness the Raja Saheb, through his Dewan, and carried out by Mr. Davies and his staff, could not have been bettered.

CHAPTER IV

THE BACKWATERS : QUILON

THE LAUNCHES : WE BREAKFAST LUXURIOUSLY : SMOKE AND REFLECT : OBSERVE THE SCENERY AND PEOPLE : THE SNAKE-BOATS OF TRAVANCORE : A LATE ARRIVAL AT QUILON : EARLY VISITORS, CHRISTIAN AND MOSLEM : THE Matriarchate AND THE TARWAD.

July 7.

To call the good ship "Kohinoor", on which we travel to Quilon, a launch, is to invite misconception. Imagine a double-decked Thames steamer, no funnel, but with a wheel house perched on high, a collapsible box which can be removed in a few minutes what time low canal bridges have to be negotiated ; flat bottomed, as having to navigate waters in places but three feet deep ; cabins, fair sized, say twelve by seven, fore and aft ; four-cylinder petrol engines propelling us at ten miles an hour with comfort. Their Highnesses are in the "Nellie," a similar craft, but larger and faster, and drawing more water, the latter fact the cause of some uneasiness to the pilots of the expedition, later to be justified.

At first we sit in the cabin forward. But the scenery is too fine to be missed in any



detail, and one becomes impatient of peering from small windows. Happy thought! The fore-peak, reached by undignified scramble, provides a splendid position of vantage, whence an uninterrupted view of land and water, and all the wonders thereof, may be obtained. Here, then, we sit on chairs of ease, at first keenly observant and wide-awake, later reflective, monosyllabic in conversation. For maximum of comfort in travel give me a cushioned seat on a boat moving smoothly with no apparent effort over still waters.

But, though it seem inexcusable bathos, even in supremely delightful and romantic surroundings man must eat ; so, having passed the frontier station, after which we are in Travancore, we come alongside the caterer's craft, larger than ours, are made fast to one side, while Their Highnesses' boat is on the other. The other launches cling tight to their big sisters' skirts, and thus, all moving on the while, that the breezes may freely refresh and revive, we devour an excellent meal, provided by Spencer of Madras.

Breakfast over, again we separate, Their Highnesses leading the way, the rest tailing

out behind. Again the chairs in the forepeak; again clouds of tobacco smoke and reflections; we are in as happy a plight as may well be imagined.

Thoughts come uninvited of this and of that; especially of the land we are traversing. Kerala! Truly India is a country of beautiful place names. The melting syllables suggest the soft smoothness, the glorious colours, of this land of many waters. Once a mighty Empire, with the Canaras of the North and South under its sway, with all Malabar, Cochin and Travancore, Kerala's capital was at Vanchi, now but a shadow of its former self, the modern Tiruvanchikulam, but in ancient days a world-famed centre of international trade and culture. Its rulers had imperial titles; they were *Cheraman Perumals*, the "strong men of Kera", and held sway from about the ninth century until the breaking up of their dominions into separate states.

Conspicuous figures in Indian history have been here before us. Vasco da Gama visited Cochin in 1502, for instance, and again in 1524, to die and be buried in the Church of St. Francis which we visited, though he lies there no more. If local legend be correct, St. Thomas

may well have preached hereabouts, though the scene of his traditional labours lies further to the south. Beyond question, in past centuries there have been happenings of romantic and historic import on these waterways ; one imagines those other men and women of other days, other costumes and manners, all playing their parts for their time, to pass on making room for others. The motion is pleasant, the air drowsy, there is something of a glare on the waters ; to declare ourselves awake would be an exaggeration. Suddenly a prolonged wail, followed by a shouting of many voices. Startled, we look up from digestive meditation ; we are passing four crowded snake boats of prodigious length, a hundred men to each, with groups of village elders to hold aloft the umbrellas of red, of purple, of green and blue, the insignia of royalty. As the paddles fly the elders stamp, wave energetic hands to time the movements of the rowers, their bodies jerking regularly even as the company behind the dancing girl swayingly keep time to her dance ; in the bows, right over the foaming waters which leap to touch his feet as the boat is urged along, a paddler astride, supported by rope stirrups ; astern, a group of six or eight,

with massive sweeps, keep the boat to her course, standing for the purpose on the snake's head high-reared.

Above all else, the song! Such a song, quickening the pulse, vikings of old roared what time they came homeward with plunder and captives after successful raid; a line by some high voiced soloist repeated by the crews of all four boats in unison, each beat of the *motif* accented by the combined paddles. A royal welcome, again and again meeting Their Highnesses, every three or four miles.

We pass through lakes where the shore line is hardly visible, twelve or more miles distant, to narrow waters where overhanging branches touch the wooden awning overhead, and naked little boys and girls catch the oranges we throw them, with every sign of delight; a Hindu shrine, rude as to carving, pagoda-shaped, stands side by side with a little stone church in design typical of the ideals of Western Ecclesiastical architecture, denoting a Christian population, perhaps very ancient; triumphal arches at every village, strings of auspicious leaves hanging before the smallest hut, all in sign of greeting to the Maharaja

and Maharani. Thus we come to Karmadi, town of some importance, gay in decoration, with a troupe of sandal-pasted youth performing for our benefit a series of ancient movements with wooden sword and shield, sole relic of the old feudal system which ordered each locality to keep ready, and trained, bodies of armed men for the ruler's use at need. The system has gone, the need has gone, the occasional exhibition of trained skill remains.

At Karmadi the Dewan received a special welcome, first of many given him by the good folk of Travancore, in grateful memory of his past services on their behalf.

Again we go on, past Alleppey, port and commercial centre, without halting. The sun shines now in radiance, the shores are lined with smiling people, nearly all men ; only occasionally does one catch a glimpse of a rural beauty, shyly bending round some protecting tree, or hut door, to see the strangers as they pass. Here and there hang melancholy gallows-like erections of long poles and nets, the "China nets," found nowhere else ; suspended in face of a swiftly flowing current, they catch the fish forced in from the sea by the tide.

So the day passes. As it becomes darker, the mystery of the Backwaters becomes more pronounced, the shadows flung by tall palms longer, the white-clad, torch lit, groups at each village more picturesque. Now and again we encounter little families in long, narrow, dug-outs, paddling hard to avoid the wash from the launches, feverishly baling in preparation. One wonders where they come from, whither they are going, remembering that year in and year out, century after century, similarly dressed, or undressed, people have thus gone about their business on these waters, in boats whose pattern has not changed since the first navigator of inventive mind hollowed out the first tree trunk. Most impressive to the western mind this atmosphere of changelessness.

Sudden confusion ahead, whistles, hoarse shoutings ; Their Highnesses' boat has gone aground. Long bamboo poles push in vain ; but numbers of dug-outs appear as by magic, their crews with willing energy leap into the breast-deep water, to push and strain, as ants push and pull a bee. They succeed, and we go on, but soon after the "Nellie" is fast again ; Their Highnesses change into the "Kohinoor," leading the "Nellie" to her fate.

It is now late evening, the shores are indeterminate, dim shadows of trees and wide spaces, our lamps reflected from the waters add to the surrounding darkness, beacon lights here and there impress as part of an all-pervading unreality. We are overdue, regretting already the inconvenience we must be causing those who wait to greet us at Quilon, thinking too, perhaps, that the dinner hour is long past ; on the horizon appear circling beams of light, signals from the Thangacherri light-house on the coast ; we are nearing our destination. A rocket streams high up to watching stars, presumably to signal our passing, we turn a sharp corner—and are promptly in fairyland. Innumerable lights shine upon us, tall palaces are outlined in flickering flame, on an illuminated jetty waits a crowd of reception, a band begins to play ; the launch glides shorewards, stops, we land at Quilon. A few words of welcome from the Dewan of Travancore, some hasty introductions, garlands and cheering ; Their Highnesses retire to their rooms above, we of their party fare sumptuously below, and so—to bed.

July 8. Quilon.

Rooms of white stone, surprisingly high,
10

luxuriously spacious verandahs, an atmosphere of dignified age, such is the impression given by the Residency at Quilon, first resting place for the Maharaja and Maharani in Travancore. Attached to the main building by covered verandahs are two smaller houses, in former times habitations for the Resident's Assistant and Surgeon. Lawned and flowered gardens stretch sloping to the Backwater, terraced trees of noble size yield glimpses here and there of its glittering sheen under the morning sun ; launches move fussily to and fro ; on the far side, other masses of trees grow up to the walls of a white palace, of all his dwellings most favoured, I am told, by His Highness of Travancore.

Quilon has witnessed many stirring scenes, its name appears again and again in the history of the South. Here is a church, said to have been founded by St. Thomas himself, whom the local Syrian Christians believe to have landed at Cranganore in A. D. 52—of which Mr. MacKenzie, a former Resident, says, “There is in this tradition nothing that is improbable,” supporting his remark by evidence more or less convincing, derived mainly from the writings of the early fathers.

The history of Christianity in the Travancore State is a subject of special interest, not only because there is ground to believe that from early times a Christian Church has been in existence on this coast, but also because at the present day nearly one-fourth of the people of Travancore are Christians. The Census of 1901 gave the population of the State as 2,951,132, of whom 6,97,387 or 23·6 per cent. were Christians.

“ Of these Christians in Travancore, 451,570 or two-thirds of the whole number are shown in the Census returns as Syrian Christians. These Syrian Christians, so called, are the representatives of an ancient Oriental Church that flourished in this part of India. They are Hindus by race and they speak the Malayalam language which is spoken by their neighbours. This name Syrian is given to them in common parlance, not because of any racial traits, but because in their churches they still use Syriac or Chaldaic liturgies they appear in the middle ages to have been Nestorian, but after the arrival of the Portuguese on this coast these Syrian Christians became Roman Catholic, and the bulk of them are so still following, however, their own Syriac Rite. When the Dutch took the place of the Portuguese on this coast, about one-third of the Syrian Christians

quitted the Roman obedience and passed under the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch. After the English took the Dutch settlements on this coast, a portion of these Jacobite Syrians were influenced by the teaching of the C. M. S. Missionaries and broke off from Antioch. These are usually called the Reformed Syrians. Some thousands went further and formally became members of the Church of England, giving up their Syriac liturgy. Such are the present divisions of the Syrian Christians in Travancore. There is also a large number of Roman Catholics who follow the usual Latin Rite."

It is on record that in the year 825 two Bishops arrived at Quilon by sea, Mar Sapir and Mar Prodh, traditionally men of saintly conduct, and workers of miracles, of whom nothing else is known ; it is however a fact that from the time of their coming there arose two divisions of Syrian Christians, the Northerners dating their years, months and days after the fashion ordained by Thomas Cana of Cranganore, the Southerners following the calendar of Quilon.

Hither, Alfred the Great of England, according to the Saxon Chronicle, sent alms to

Christian Churches in the year 883. Does this not seem to bridge the centuries? How did news of the existence of this far country, and the religion therein established, reach Alfred? What sort of men were they who brought it? How did they journey, and what was the manner of their reception?

Then in 1328, Pope John at Avignon,—the Church in Europe at that time being sore rent and torn—consecrated Friar Jordan as Bishop of Quilon, giving him a letter to the “chief of the Nazarene Christians at Quilon.” History knows nought of the friar, as to whether he reached his destination or not. A few years later, there came to Quilon John de Marignoli, returning from a mission to China. His news of the place is still in existence. He says :

On Palm Sunday, 1348, we arrived at a very noble city of India called Quilon, where the whole world's pepper is produced. Now this pepper grows on a kind of vines which are planted just as in our vineyards. These vines produce clusters which at first are like those of the wild vine of a green colour and afterwards are almost like the bunches of our grapes, and they have in them a red wine which I have squeezed out on my plate as a condiment. When they have ripened they are left to dry on the tree and when shrivelled by the

excessive heat the dry clusters are knocked off with a stick and caught upon linen cloths and so the harvest is gathered. These are things that I have seen with mine eyes and handled with my hands during the fourteen months that I stayed there. And there is no roasting of the pepper as some authors have falsely asserted, nor does it grow in forests but in regular gardens, nor are the Saracens the proprietors but the Christians of St. Thomas. And these latter are the masters of the public weighing office (*qui habent stateram ponderis totius mundi*), from which I derived, as a perquisite of my office as Pope's Legate, every month a hundred gold fanams and a thousand when I left.

There is a Church of St. George there, of the Latin communion, at which I dwelt, and I adorned it with fine paintings, and taught there the Holy Law. And after I had been there some time I went beyond the glory of Alexander the Great, when he set up his column. For I erected a stone as my land-mark and memorial, and anointed it with oil. In sooth it was a marble pillar with a stone cross on it, intended to last till the world's end. And it had the Pope's arms and my own engraved on it with inscription both in Indian and in Latin characters. I consecrated and blessed it in the presence of an infinite multitude of people and I was carried on the shoulders of the chiefs in a litter or palanquin like Solomon's. So after a year and four months I took leave of the brethren (*valefaciens fratribus*).

As to this Mr. Mackenzie says :—

The pillar which Marignoli erected may be the pillar which the Dutch chaplain Baldaeus saw more than three centuries later :

“ Upon the rocks near the sea-shore of Coulang stands a stone pillar, erected there, as the inhabitants report, by St. Thomas. I saw the pillar in 1662.”

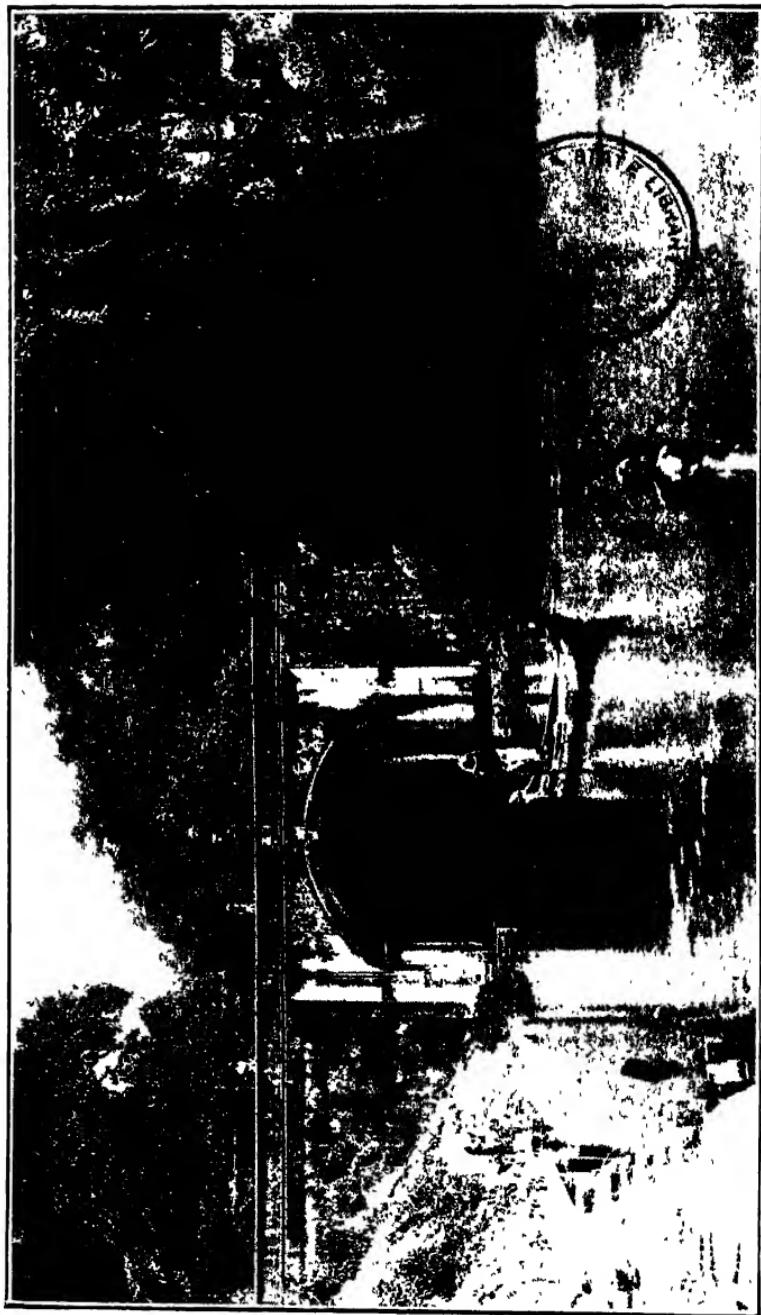
The pillar was still standing within the last century, being washed away at last in a storm.

The great Eastern traveller of the 14th Century was Ibn Batuta, *alias* Abu Abdulla Mahomed, who left Tanjiers on pilgrimage in 1324. He visited Afghanistan, and was there made Chief Judge. Came an embassy from China seeking permission to rebuild a Buddhist Temple in the Himalayas, for it was much frequented by Chinese pilgrims ; Ibn Batuta was selected to take back an answer, and, embarking at Cambay, put in at Calicut as a guest of the Zamorin. A great storm arose, his ships had to put out to sea, and Ibn was left on land, to travel by Backwater to Quilon, there to embark. His ships, however, were wrecked and the ambassador, deprived of the means of executing his mission, spent the next three years in Malabar. Hear what he says of Quilon.

It is "one of the finest cities in Malabar with magnificent markets and very wealthy merchants :" the king is "eminent for his strict and terrible justice." The king, it may be noted, was but one of "twelve kings, the greatest of whom has fifty thousand troops at his command ; the least five thousand or thereabouts. That which separates the district of one king from that of another is a wooden gate upon which is written : 'The gate of safety of such an one'. For, when any criminal escapes from the district of one king and gets safely into that of another he is quite safe "

Motors had been provided by the State for Their Highnesses and party, first for the exploration of the town, and later for the journey to Trivendrum, the Capital. The local officials were all in most courteous attention on their Highnesses, including the Dewan, Mr. M. Krishna Nair, the Dewan Peishkar, the District Engineer, Mr. O. S. Barrow, the last of whom accompanied Their Highnesses' car, and explained the various objects of interest.

We drive out of the Residency Compound on to a wide maidan, over roads cut with a careful rectangularity which causes one at once to



suspect a military origin. Enquiry shows that Quilon was, not so very long ago, a considerable British Cantonment. Though glories of that kind have long departed, still it is a most attractively interesting town. We pass through wide streets, over picturesque canals crowded by straw canopied country boats, past the typical detached family houses, or tarwads, characteristic of Malabar and the coast, each surrounded by a wall of dried mud topped with a decoration of palm leaves; obvious prosperity shown everywhere in homes and people, in smiling crowds and fine buildings; and everywhere the green luxuriance to which our latter journeyings have accustomed us. Kerala is the home of the matriarchate, that most incomprehensible family system which regards maternity as the important point in family organisation, paternity as a mere biological necessity for the maintenance of satisfactory census returns. Each of the tarwads we pass represents, if it be a Nayar, a joint property to which all the members of the family have equal right, which is imparible; but—"The Tarwad consists of all the descendants of a common ancestress, in the female line only children belong to the

same caste or sub-caste as their mother, not that of their father the offspring of the union belong to their mother's tarwad, and have no sort of claim, so far as the law of *marumakkattayam* (descent through sister's children) goes, to a share of their father's property, or to maintenance therefrom." Thus the Malabar Gazetteer.

Where a member of a tarwad marries a girl of a lower caste not only does she not become a member of her husband's family, but his children do not belong to him, have no claim upon him in law. We have met with cases where the father embracing his children, is, by that entirely natural and proper act, ceremonially polluted, must perform cleansing ceremonies before he can again greet his mother or sister. This seems to me a crowning absurdity, but I am scarcely in a position to appreciate the system ; I look at it through patriarchal blinkers.

The State Manual tells me that "each house has its own name by which the members are known, and is called by the generic title of '*Illam*', the term used by Brâhmins, or '*Mana*', which is the reverential expression of the Sudras and other classes. *Illam* is a Telegu